

DON'T SAY WOMEN AREN'T KEEN ABOUT SPORTS



I.

"My dear, it's chartreuse Gros de Londres with cuffs and collar of picot-edged ninnon—"



II.

"Oh, look! Our boys have made a run (or a hit or a point or a goal, as the case may be). Isn't that just splendid!"



III.

"Well, as I was saying, the skirt is set on with organ-pleats, and there is a hoop-petticoat to wear under it."

THE LAST GREETING

By ANNA GADE

Translated, with Introductory Comment, by William L. McPherson.

War simplifies life and purges it of many of its corruptions. The passions of war dwarf all other passions. The universal suffering and sacrifice which it entails makes the scattered, individual tragedies of ordinary existence seem petty and colorless.

Yet the ironies and infidelities of ordinary life remain, even if they are overshadowed in the bigger, deeper drama. It is the striking merit of the story which follows that it gives a military investiture to one of the familiar personal tragedies of peace and thus successfully merges the smaller reaction in the greater. The author is Anna Gade, a well known German short story writer.

A SOUND of church bells floated through the soft, mild air of the spring morning. A little strangely in this year of desolation these voices of bronze rang out across the silvery surface of the majestic river. From the tower of the old Fishers' Church, high up on the wooded bank of the Elbe, they carried their message back into the country—solemnly, more insistently, perhaps, than usual, in spite of the laughing sunlight and all the joyous settings of spring time beauty. From afar off came the echoes of Hamburg's mighty bells, mingled with the lighter tones of the Altländer Church chiming on the other side of the stream.

For a moment the stranger in a field gray uniform stood in the show street of the picturesque fishing village, lined with handsome villas, and listened to the church bell chorus. He also gazed at the white house across the way, lying deep in the background of its park-like, beautifully cared-for garden like the shimmering castle in a fairy tale.

So that was the place! Truly an idyllic home, high up in the whispering greenness of the Elbe's hills, with a far-flung view of the spreading river.

A very picture of peace. Color and fragrance were all about the house. Golden blooms stood out from the emerald green of the bushes and the heavy scent of blossoms filled the air.

The man at the gate, who, coming from the roughness and squalor of trench life, caught all of a sudden a glimpse of this fairy-like home, had, as it were, a vision of a radiantly beautiful young woman, with laughing, nymph-like eyes, walking through the mellow light and fragrance of the garden—in a stately, white robe, with the sun's rays sparkling in her waving golden hair. Nothing sombre seemed to him in keeping with the joyously colored picture, with the white, glistening villa.

Yet, would not the care-free, laughing, challenging eyes of the beautiful woman whom he did not know, but whose picture had so deeply impressed him, be veiled with tears, as were those of so many other of her companions in bereavement?

It seemed impossible to him to imagine those eyes dimmed with pain and suffering—the lines of that tender mouth hardened by the bitterness of sorrow.

There were some women whose radiant beauty could not be associated with the gloom of suffering and mourning. They were meant to bewitch men and to master them—even to the point of turning love into hate. And there were others whom the dedication of sorrow ennobled. In their cases men bowed silently before the insignia of grief.

Captain Sandow, as he walked slowly toward the white house, forced back his thoughts

to the mission which had brought him there; for at any moment he might meet the beautiful stranger, whose husband, with so many other brave comrades, now slept his last sleep on alien soil.

On such a golden Sunday morning it was a melancholy duty which he had to fulfill. But since he had arrived in Hamburg only the night before and was obliged to go away again early the next morning, he could not choose his time otherwise. In any case, so he had decided after much reflection, it would show more respect to the wife and be more of a tribute of comradeship to the dead husband to make a personal call, since he happened to be by accident in the neighborhood. If he did not find her at home, then he could deliver his message by letter, as he had originally intended to do.

As he drew near the white house there reached him, at a little turning of the pathway, sounds like the merry, romping chatter of a child. And a woman's subdued voice. Soft, tender words, such as a mother uses toward her little ones.

The beautiful woman with the alluring eyes in the aura of motherhood! The thought came to him as a new surprise, almost as a shock. It was something out of harmony with the idea of her which he had got from her picture.

He walked in the direction from which the sounds came. In a moment he found himself (in the midst of all the golden sunshine and the spring time verdure) in the presence of a woman dressed in the deepest black.

She sat on a white garden seat under the spreading branches of an apple tree, heavy with pinkish white blossoms. Her head was bent low over a piece of needlework. Two plain gold rings shone on her small, delicate right hand. Beside her, in a little go-cart, was an attractive, blond-haired child, busily playing with a grotesquely colored jumping jack.

Intently, almost reverently, the soldier in field-gray studied that gracious and tranquil picture.

And this pale, slender woman—The longer he looked at her, the more confused his thoughts became. A sort of mental panic attacked him—then a black paralyzing fear.

She looked at him in wonderment and got up from her seat. Collecting himself, he greeted her respectfully and then advanced toward her. He could read the question framing itself in her mournful face. What did this strange officer want? And why did he stare at her so queerly, so inquisitively? She, too, became a little embarrassed, and tiny, palish red spots showed in her cheeks.

He passed his hand across his brow and

thought of his vision, of the radiant picture which still swam as in a dream before his eyes. And now something dark, something sinister, stood in the golden sunlight of this fairy-like home, in which nothing distressing, nothing dismal, had seemed to him to be in place.

Two eyes, in which he read a deep and lasting sorrow, gazed out at him in the midst of all this spring-time joyousness and splendor. These eyes were entirely strange to him.

Yet they forced him, with their unspoken question, to collect his thoughts, to master his surprise.

He introduced himself, and asked whether he had not the honor to see before him the wife of his lately fallen comrade, Reserve First Lieutenant B., formerly proprietor of the Brunkhorst Steel Works.

The young wife nodded assent, and looked at him with her saddened eyes almost, it seemed to him, as if in fear and aversion.

"You knew my husband?" she inquired, and invited him to accompany her into the house, unless, perhaps, he should prefer to sit outside in the garden.

Captain Sandow thanked her politely, and, while she turned the child over to a nurse who had come out from the villa, he drew up a white cane chair.

"Of course, gnädige Frau," he answered,

with some hesitation (and it seemed as if he was struggling hard to get his thoughts in order); "I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with your husband at the front—if only slightly."

Again his glance fell on her searchingly. How girlish an effect the woman opposite him produced! How frail and delicate in the deep black of her widow's weeds!

And yet on this childish, soft face there were lines about the mouth and eyes which only those have to whom life has brought more grievous pangs than death itself can ever hope to bring.

"Gnädige Frau," he continued (and he drew himself up in his chair and his voice now sounded completely natural and collected), "what has brought me here, and what an official journey gave me the opportunity to deliver to you in person instead of sending it by letter, is in itself little, and yet I think it may be also a great deal. It is a last greeting, a last remembrance, from your husband."

She bent forward awkwardly, her eyes set, and looked at him. It almost seemed to him as if incredulously.

"A last greeting? For me? From my husband?"

Her eyes gleamed as if a ray of light had penetrated their settled gloom. It was as though he had brought her a precious gift.

"You were there when he fell?" she asked, and her looks devoured him. "How did he die? Was it really an heroic death, as they wrote me when they sent me his personal effects?"

Captain Sandow plucked carefully one of the rose blossoms with which the overhanging bough of the apple tree was laden. And while he examined it he answered calmly:

"They told you the truth, gnädige Frau. They did not exaggerate. Your husband died a hero's death."

She sat quite still, her hands folded. And in the silence which hung over the garden as oriole trilled its melodious notes. He talked on. Laboriously and slowly. Were there not untruths more sacred than the truth?

And he looked continually at the little apple blossom in his hand.

"I found him mortally wounded on the edge of a wood. I bent over him. He opened his eyes and looked at me. 'Comrade—a greeting—to wife and child.' Then it was over."

He stopped. And the oriole trilled and jubilated.

"I think," he resumed, after a pause, "it is something beautiful and consoling to be the last thought of a dying man."

She gazed at him again. And again it seemed as if a ray of light penetrated the settled gloom of her eyes. As if a full breath stirred her whole body. As if the lines which had been graven about her tender mouth became a little less harsh.

"That, gnädige Frau, was what brought me here," he said, as he arose to go.

Silently she reached him her hand, in heartfelt gratitude. Words of confidence, born of that gratitude, seemed to struggle in her for expression. But the shyness of her grief conquered; and he respected that shyness.

The waves of the river rippled and glistened. The officer in field gray, deep in thought, sat on a lonely bench back near the stern of the returning steamer. Snow white moths flew about the vessel like pale spirits from another world.

A group of young girls in Sunday clothes, with white summer hats and wreaths of roses, sang a merry song—a song of spring and love and happiness. Care-free youth, which could still face smilingly the deepest mysteries of life! Fortunate youth!

And the man in the stern of the steamer drew his letterbook from his pocket and took a photograph out of it.

A photograph which on the morning after the funeral he had found in a letter addressed to the dead man, lying at the edge of the wood, not far from the burial place. A letter which had probably fallen unnoticed when he was carried away by the ambulance corps men in the gathering darkness—which he had perhaps himself with a last effort taken out of his pocket in desperate haste and which death with merciful insight had wrenched from his stiffening hands.

The picture with the laughing eyes, which he, doing a comrade's duty, was going to make the fatal error of delivering to the wife over there in the green and gold garden of the white villa!

He looked once more at it, at the beautiful countenance with the eyes of an enchantress, and a hard smile played about his mouth.

The deadly bullet had bored a small round hole through the breast of the woman and then through that of the man who wore the picture over his heart. On the snow white of her costly lace waist there was a little dark spot. A tiny drop of blood.

Slowly the captain arose and walked to the railing. There he broke the stiff card into bits.

Then he leaned over and while he tossed the broken pieces of cardboard into the stream he glanced once more up at the wooded heights of the Elbe, in which a white house lay imbedded in the shining green—a house to which this golden spring morning had in a measure brought back peace.

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By Alice Duer Miller

Impressions of the Democratic Convention.

"The New York Times" correspondent at St. Louis was astonished and pained at the fact that of two speeches in favor of their enfranchisement the one based on sentiment was less applauded by the women than the one based on the practical dangers of antagonizing the woman voters.

We trust no little girl in the audience will brush the bloom from his innocence by explaining to him that politicians are naughty men, often more influenced by votes than pretty sentiments, and that these speeches were made for politicians.

He fancies probably that women make their appeal for political liberty as follows:

To the Resolutions Committee.

Speak to me only of my vote
In terms of sentiments;
Or leave in mind a phrase or toast,
And I'll not ask for sense.
The suffrage plank your party wrote
Doth give me joy intense,
But what true women value most
Is manly eloquence.

Suffragists must feel honored at the discovery that they are being attacked by the same man who attacked Lincoln, and almost in the same words.

"The Woman's Journal" of June 3d says that Mr. John P. Irish, who campaigned in the Eastern States for the antis, and more recently in Iowa, became editor of "The State Press," of Iowa City, on July 6, 1864. On July 13 of that year the following editorial appeared:

LINCOLN'S SUPPORTERS.

"Shoddyites, pilferers, political preachers and a few fair but foolish fanatics. The means by which his election is to be carried, bayonets, bullets, boroughs (rotten) bullying and beastliness. The result of his election will be star chamber courts on a grander scale than ever. A looseness in public and private morals equal to that which prevailed during the French Revolution."

And just the other day at St. Louis, a newspaper correspondent was reminded of the knitting women of the French Revolution when he saw the suffragists in the galleries keeping tally of the vote.

The Democratic party has indorsed a principle, which something over a year ago "The New York Times" declared was repugnant to instincts that strike their roots deep in the order of nature, which ran counter to human reason and flouted the teaching of experience, and which would result either in political muddle or in social turmoil tending to weaken the state and stir up discord in society and the home.

And now what is "The Times's" editorial comment on this great party calamity?

"The rest of the platform does not much matter."

"There's some enemy after her, no doubt," the King said, without even looking round. "That wood's full of them."

"But aren't you going to run and help her?" Alice asked, very much surprised at his taking it so quietly.

"No use, no use," said the King, "she runs so fearfully fast. . . . But I'll make a memorandum about her if you like. She's a dear, good creature."

A good many politicians in the last month have been saying: "No, we won't

help them, but we'll put a plank in the platform about them if you like. They're dear, good creatures."

In both parties the anti-suffragist members were inconsistent in merely opposing the introduction of a suffrage plank. They should have insisted on the introduction of an anti-suffrage plank, reading about like this:

"Believing that indirect influence is more potent than the ballot, and that the majority of women do not want to be enfranchised, we declare ourselves opposed to the principle of woman suffrage."

If indirect influence is more potent than the ballot, and if the majority of women don't want the vote, why wouldn't this have been the shrewdest of political moves?

A Candidate's Appeal.

Lady! Lady! Vote for me!
Not for any suffrage Willy;
For to me you seem to be
Most incomparably silly,
And unfit to a degree
For the ballot. Vote for me!